



# Superintendent's HOPE Note - February 2024

*Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.*

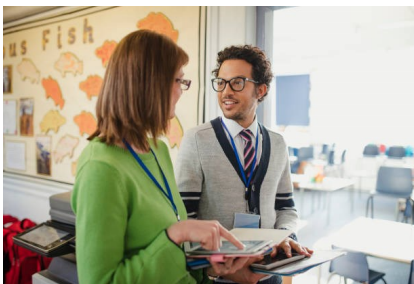
Henry Ford

## Redefining Professional Development

Imagine a spacious room with chairs arranged in a theater-style formation and a scattering of tables throughout. In front stands a speaker, brimming with anticipation to deliver an 85-slide PowerPoint presentation spanning the next four hours.

If you're already conjuring excuses to avoid such a session, rest assured, you're not alone. Just as classroom instruction thrives on collaboration and shared problem-solving, effective professional development operates on the same principles. For the 2024-2025 school year, we're committed to offering more meaningful opportunities for teachers' professional development. The proposed district calendar and our building schedules will reflect this commitment.

Our aim is not to subject teachers and staff to endless sit-and-get sessions. While some training sessions will be necessary, most of our time will be structured to allow team members to collaborate and refine their professional skills alongside their peers. We're reshaping our approach to professional development to ensure that our discussions are truly learner-centered, not program-focused.



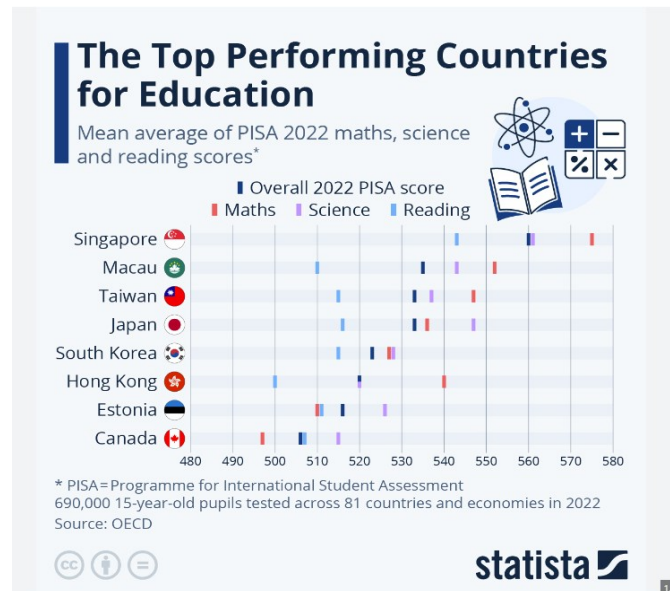
### Why Focus on Teacher Collaboration?

- **Enhanced Professional Growth:** Collaborating with peers allows teachers to share expertise, strategies, and resources, leading to professional development and growth.
- **Improved Instructional Practices:** Collaboration enables teachers to exchange ideas about effective teaching methods, curriculum development, and assessment strategies, leading to improved instructional practices in the classroom.
- **Increased Student Achievement:** When teachers collaborate, they can identify and implement best practices that are proven to impact student learning outcomes positively.
- **Support for Diverse Learners:** Collaboration facilitates the sharing of strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and gifted students.
- **Shared Resources and Accountability:** Collaborative planning and resource-sharing help distribute the workload among teachers, reducing individual burdens and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for student success.
- **Stronger School Culture and Community:** Collaborative environments promote a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among teachers, leading to a more robust school culture and a more cohesive learning community.
- **Innovative Problem-Solving:** Collaboration encourages teachers to brainstorm creative solutions to everyday challenges, fostering innovation and flexibility in response to changing educational needs.
- **Increased Job Satisfaction:** Collaboration can lead to greater job satisfaction among teachers, as they feel supported, valued, and empowered to make meaningful contributions to student learning and school improvement efforts.



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## Our Focus: Quality Over Quantity



- ☞ *"While teachers in high-performing systems do not necessarily have greater amounts of specified professional learning time compared to other systems, these teachers do, however, have fewer teaching hours each week than teachers in other countries, and comparatively more time to spend on improving their own teaching and learning. (Jensen, et al., 2016)*
- ☞ *"When we work together, we create a better learning experience. Teacher collaboration positively impacts student achievement, and allows us as educators to explore new territory." (Gates, 2018)*
- ☞ *"Working together may make it easier for teachers to identify and address problems in students' progress, share information about individual students from grade to grade or develop curricula and approaches to teaching that are consistent and coherent across grades and subject areas." (Schleifer, et al. 2017)*
- ☞ *"In the past, attempts to get more time earmarked for professional learning have in fact failed to improve student outcomes. In part, the reason for this failure is that professional learning is effective only when it becomes a normal part of daily work life in schools." (Jensen, et al., 2016)*
- ☞ *"Working together may make it easier for teachers to identify and address problems in students' progress, share information about individual students from grade to grade or develop curricula and approaches to teaching that are consistent and coherent across grades and subject areas." (Schleifer, et al. 2017)*

Sources:

Gates, S. (2018). Benefits of Collaboration: When educators work together, we create a better learning experience. NEA.com. Retrieved from <https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/benefits-collaboration>

Schleifer, D., Rinehart, C., & Yanisch, T. (2017). Teacher Collaboration In Perspective: A Guide to Research. Public Agenda. Retrieved from <http://www.in-perspective.org/pages/teacher-collaboration>

Jensen, B., Sonnemann, J., Roberts-Hull, K., & Hunte, A. (January 2016). Beyond PD: Teacher Professional Learning in High-Performing Systems. Learning First.



## Piece of the Puzzle

This month, the Middle School Staff and Administrators were nominated for the positive turnaround in the building's culture. They support each other inside and outside of school, implement new teaching strategies learned in professional development, adapt to new technologies, and accommodate diverse learners. Their resilience and hard work earned this month's Piece of the Puzzle!

